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REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action of January 31, 2006. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 11-29 are requested.

The Office Action

The Examiner objected to claims 1, 5, 7, 8, and 9 for various informalities.

Claims 1, 3, and 5-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph and 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1, 3, 5-6, and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Nelson (US 3,407,634).

Claims 7 and 8 do not stand rejected on art and are understood to contain allowable subject matter if placed in independent form and the objections resolved and the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 resolved.

Amendments to the Specification

The amendments to page 5 of the specification find support in Figures 3-4, which show the perforations as having diameters slightly greater than the nails, and in claim 8 as originally filed, which defines the perforations as having a diameter slightly greater than the outside diameter of the pointed nails. This, of course, means that the nails are releasable from the perforations. A person skill in the art, having read and understood from the original application with a mind willing to understand, would have understood that the perforations have diameters which are slightly greater than the outside diameter of the nails, which permits releasable securements of the nails therein. The amendment to the second paragraph of page 5 finds antecedent basis in original claim 3, which specifies that the rigid planar sheet material is preferably plywood.

Claim Objections and 35 U.S.C. § 112

The original claims have been cancelled and new claims carefully rewritten to avoid the objections which the Examiner had raised to the prior claims

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and to resolve the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraph rejections raised by the Examiner.

**The Claims Are Supported
By the Specification As Filed**

New claim 11 is supported by original claim 1, and by page 6, line 8 which describes that each perforation is beveled at entry in order to promote an easy entry of nails during use, and by page 6, lines 19-23 which describes the perforations having a tilt to provide assurance "that the nails will not slide out from their desired inserted position". Figures 3 and 4 also show the perforations as having diameters slightly larger than the nails. Further, claim 8, as originally filed, defines the perforations as having a diameter slightly greater than the outside diameter of the pointed nails. This, of course, means that the nails are releasable from the perforations.

**The Claims Distinguish Patentably Over Nelson
And Are in Condition For Allowance**

The Nelson patent discloses a hide stretching frame and a method for building the same. As discussed in column 3, lines 1-10, and with reference to Figure 1, Nelson discloses a method involving the cutting out a series of oval frames from a single plywood panel, such that each frame is smaller than the next. Accordingly, the resulting frames are oval hoops having an open center region. Nails are driven into the frame all along the perimeter and bent so that the pointed ends extend into the open central region and extend perpendicular to the frame. A pelt is secured to the frame via the nails.

In an alternate embodiment, the nails are replaced with movable bolts. The tip of each bolt has a nail portion which extends perpendicular to the frame. Accordingly, the bolts may be used to adjust the length by which the nail portion extends into the opening in the frame.

The hide stretching frame disclosed in Nelson is quite different from the present invention as now claimed. In contrast to Nelson, the applicant's invention is akin to a pegboard on which a new pelt may be stretched and dried by inserting nails through the pelt into the perforations arranged in an oval pattern thereon. The nails

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are **releasably** inserted into the perforations and may be easily removed from the board once the pelt is dried. In stark contrast, Nelson requires the nails to be **permanently** driven into the frame. The nails are then bent in the form of an "S" and secured by a staple **24A**, which renders the resulting hide stretching frame expensive to manufacture. Moreover, Nelson clearly teaches away from the feature of nails being releasable from the frame, since in Nelson the nails are driven into the frame and further secured with staple means **24A**.

Moreover, the applicant's construction may be easily adapted to be used with different sized pelts by using on the same "pegboard" consecutively smaller ovals of perforations. While Nelson discloses a means for adjusting the hide stretching frame to accept different sized pelts, it teaches a complicated bolt-in-casing mechanism which again is expensive to manufacture.

Furthermore, **new claim 11** now requires the perforations to extend from the front side to the rear side. This is different from Nelson. Nelson does not disclose or suggest perforations as required by the new claims. A perforation is defined as a hole. A nail lodged in a wooden board would not ordinarily be considered a hole as it is filled by the nail.

Additionally, Nelson does not disclose or suggest the use of a template having a plurality of markers spaced and aligned in the form of at least a section of a shape, such as an oval, as required by new **independent claims 20 and 24**. At column 3, lines 1-10 of Nelson, there is disclosed that to make a series of frames in graduated size, a first cut is made on the outline, which outline is of size and shape according to the smallest frame opening size required. Accordingly, it is clear that the outline **11** is the smallest, centermost oval that is drawn on the board in Figure 1, and defines the central region of the smallest first frame **13**. Successive cuts on further outlines **12, 14, and 16** produce additional, successively larger frames **15 and 17**. Accordingly, Nelson teaches drawing outlines on the wooden board to use as a guide to cut out consecutively larger frames. However, there is no teaching in Nelson of using a separate and distinct sheet material template to be used as a guide for making the perforations to make the apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as currently claimed.

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There is also no teaching that two pelts may be dried on the same frame as claimed in **new claim 29**. A person skilled in the art would not attempt to dry two pelts stacked one on top of the other as this would increase the time required to dry the pelts.

In view of the above, the applicant is the first to discover a simple, inexpensive and elegant solution to the problem of stretching and drying pelts.

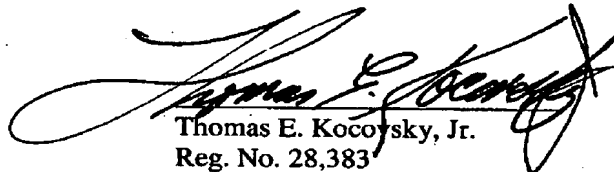
CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, it is submitted that claims 11-29 now distinguish patentably over the references of record and meet all statutory requirements. An early allowance of all claims is requested.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he is requested to telephone Thomas Kocovsky at (216) 861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

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